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A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF

VETERINARY SURGERY,

ITS SCHOOLS AND PRACTITIONERS,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF

PROPRIETORS OF DOMESTICATED ANIMALS.

BY

A VETERINARY SURGEON.

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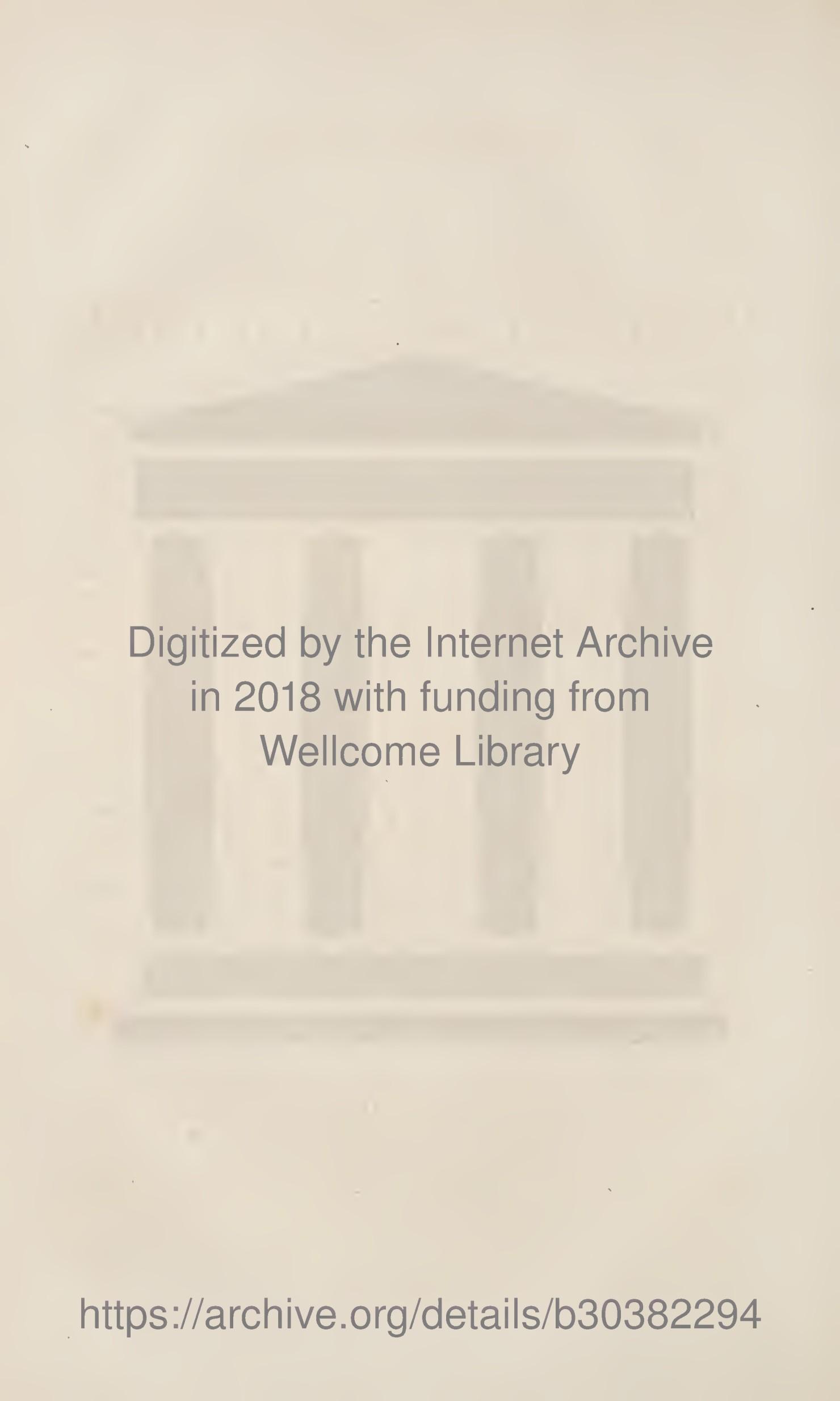
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VETERINARY SURGERY.

WORSE definitions have been constructed than that which a veterinary surgeon gave, when he said his profession was "that science which every one thinks he knows so well." There are few subjects, if any, upon which so many men think themselves qualified to say something as upon almost every thing pertaining to veterinary surgery. This is more especially the case with that part of it which relates to the general and medical management of the horse. The man who diets or dresses, and the man who rides, or merely owns one of these quadrupeds, equally consider their opinions on his maladies as entitled to some respect. If they can abstract blood or administer a drug, then they know something about veterinary medicine. Even medical men, who ought to know a great deal better, and are therefore less excusable, will occasionally step into our province, and assume pretensions which do not at all become them, —which invariably cover them with ridicule, and show them to be but superficial practitioners in their own profession. No man who has studied medicine deeply, can be ignorant that he is unfit to prescribe for more animals than those which he has learned the structure of, and the effects of drugs and other agents upon.* The fact is, veterinary medicine is a species of knowledge upon which so many plume themselves, that no one will willingly confess his ignorance. The high and the low are both infected ; literary education, though it diminishes the extent of, does not confer immunity from error ; and a man of great general information will sometimes obtrude doubt or dissent, when we least of all expect either. Indeed, we often find him confiding the care of a sick favourite to his

* It appears to me that medical men should not be entirely ignorant of veterinary medicine and surgery. It is acknowledged on all hands, that much information has been obtained by cultivating comparative anatomy, and if so, is it not likely that more may be obtained by an equal degree of attention to comparative pathology and physiology? At Vienna, and some other places, the medical students must attend two courses of veterinary medicine before they can obtain a license to practice. In this country, medical practitioners know so little of the subject, that they confound the graduate with the quack, and the works of the hireling with those of our most esteemed authors.

groom, or relying upon his own presumed fitness, when a little reflection would make him ashamed of his education, which, if it does no more, should at least keep him from attempting that which he has never prepared for, and perhaps never before thought of. These epidemical pretensions to veterinary skill are founded solely upon ignorance. They are inconsistent with a knowledge of the present state of the art, of its objects, its practitioners, the extent and nature of their studies. But few are aware how the subject has been, and still is cultivated. Many are apt to form an erroneous opinion of it, by mistaking an uneducated pretender for one of its practitioners. Its schools are hardly known to exist; its importance is not recognised; its objects are misunderstood. A little information on these points, would, at least among the enlightened and uninterested, dispel much of the confidence which error produces.

The objects of veterinary medicine and surgery are the removal or mitigation of disease, and the preservation of health among all animals useful to man. It is a mistake to suppose that it has to do with no animal but the horse. Yet it is a mistake which a few worthless veterinarians have encouraged rather than rectified. They have absolutely refused to attend any animal but the horse, and have assigned the most frivolous reasons for so doing. But ignorance or puppyism are the only two things that ever deter a man from relieving pain. 'Tis a horrid thing, said a dandified fellow from the town, to a practitioner in the country,—'tis a horrid thing to be quite, or much out of town. You have all the drudgery to do yourself, or leave it to the farm-servant, who neglects, or cannot do it. You are often called to cattle, and even, as I am credibly informed, to swine—the dirtiest of all animals. Cows are bad enough; sheep are no better; dogs are not so far amiss: but the horse is the only animal worthy of a gentleman's consideration. The others are mean, stupid, intractable; and the best of them not over cleanly. And after all—after losing your temper, and spoiling your good clothes, and degrading yourself by such undignified condescension, you are but indifferently rewarded. These are merely the weeds of a field, from which they should be rooted, as both useless and disgraceful. The pitiful greatness that will not relieve a sufferer because he is mean, is itself more contemptible than the animal it despises; and he who withholds his aid from any, can do justice to none.

Veterinary Medicine, as a science, is of recent origin; there being, I believe, no school for its cultivation prior to the year 1761; and in this country, none till thirty years afterwards. But, late as it was before it assumed a scientific form, or was systematically cultivated in this and other nations, it is one of those departments of knowledge which contribute to the happiness of life, almost from the moment of emerging from barbarism. Herds and flocks, the first and most important acquisitions of property, would become exposed to disease and to observation in proportion as they became numerous, and subject to the dominion and caprice

of man. The evils arising from domesticity would no sooner be felt than an attempt would be made to remedy them. In all ages and in all nations, men turn first upon the causes of their injuries, and next upon the means of averting them in future: remedies for a present evil are the growth of a later period, being suggested by past circumstances,—not by instinct. When the barbarian's flocks were thinned by the ravages of disease, he would look around him for the cause; and, seeing nothing to account for the mischief, he would conclude it was the work of an invisible being. Some connection would be traced between the health of his flocks and the character of the seasons. Motives similar to those actuating the savage himself, would be attributed to the power supposed to preside over the elements. The devastation of the storm would be viewed with awe and terror, as the inflictions of indignant Omnipotence. The pests, which frequently and periodically visit the early inhabitants of uncultivated districts, and which spread far and wide in uncontrolled destruction, would be ascribed to the agency of a power whose displeasure had been incurred by the sufferers. Voluntary and bloody sacrifices would be made, to atone for offence, to appease anger, or to propitiate kindness. Other circumstances would suggest the possibility of procuring immunity from danger so much dreaded and so desolating: superstition would have recourse to charms, amulets, and mystic ceremonies. How such means came to be confided in as sufficiently potent to disarm a power which no human force could oppose, is not of much consequence. The supposition once made—and it would probably be made by some curious coincidence, such, for instance, as a man possessing an oak branch at the time he escaped an imminent danger—would be believed, from the impossibility of demonstrating its falsity; and it would be perpetuated by priestcraft, the offspring of superstition. As men became wiser, however, they would discover that that had power to produce diseases which had never before been suspected. They could not blame the whirlwind or the flood for mischief done in their absence; and they would find other things to complain of than those pestilential calamities which fell among them without warning,—which left the land covered with their victims, and directed their course so capriciously as to induce a belief that they wandered under the guidance of a malignant spirit. These were only occasional occurrences; and in the intervals disease appeared here and there, and was recognised among individuals when the intervention of spiritual agents could not so plausibly be suspected. Conscious guilt would, indeed, as at present, always imagine itself the object of divine vengeance. But observation and reflection would in several cases discover the true causes of a disease. For example, that which now destroys a great many cattle, an overloaded stomach, would be traced to the sudden possession of an abundance of food after painful abstinence; and the discovery of this, which requires no very attentive observation, nor any preliminary know-

ledge, for its discovery, would tend much to diminish the future recurrence of the disease.

In many cases, a sick animal would languish for a while and ultimately recover. The restoration to health—effected by the preservative principle common to all animals—would be attributed to the occurrence of some event observed shortly before decided convalescence. Remedies would now be thought of. Something that had been accidentally done or given to the animal that had recovered soon afterwards, would be remembered as something possessing the power of healing; and it would be tried upon the very next that became ill,—no matter how different the disease, or how incomplete the evidence in favour of the remedy. The presumed cause and the remedy might be both sufficiently absurd. If an animal were to fall ill immediately after an eclipse of the moon, or after being looked at by a stranger, the philosophers of those days would have no hesitation in saying and believing that either was the cause of the malady. If a patient had been observed to drink where it never drank before, or if it had done or suffered any thing unusual, and recovered soon after, the unusual circumstance, whatever it might be, would in time to come be a remedy, not only for that particular disease, but for every other; for no distinction had yet been made. In time, however, a difference in the kinds of maladies would be observed. They would be named; their duration and mode of terminating noted; many would be confounded the one with the other, because only the external signs which indicate the existence of disease would be heeded; and in many cases these are precisely the same. Remedies, though eagerly sought, would be seldom found. In the case already alluded to of an overloaded stomach, whatever was intended for a cure would likely be given by the mouth, with the view of exerting its power upon the place where the disease was seated, or of reaching that which was doing the mischief: and after trying perhaps every likely and unlikely thing that could be thought of, a useful remedy might be at last discovered; but not probably till many animals had been sacrificed in the experiment. It is only in a case of this kind that any thing worth knowing could be learned; and unless the disease for which a remedy had been discovered had but one stage, and could not be confounded with another in which the remedy would be pernicious, it would as often be wrongly as rightly applied. Little, it is obvious, could be acquired by mere observation of the living animal. Every attempt to remove disease would be nothing but an experiment which would have to be repeated with the same uncertainty of the result, on every patient, and on the same patient every time he was one. All the higher branches of knowledge are accessible only by obtaining possession of some that are lower, or some that appear to have no direct connection with them; and so it is with medicine, whether human or veterinary. Before diseases can be successfully treated, the laws of life must be understood, and these

again cannot be comprehended till the laws of inanimate matter are observed and explained. It is no wonder, therefore, that a science which can be reached only by so circuitous a route, did not very soon attain any thing like maturity.

In the early ages of Greece and Rome, human and veterinary medicine were practised by the same person. Subsequently they were disunited, probably by the same causes which keep them distinct at the present day. Both were buried in the ruins of the eastern and western empires, and but little now remains to show that they once existed. The few fragments which time and ignorance have spared do not indicate that veterinary medicine had been highly cultivated. Indeed it could not, considering how little progress the ancients had made in the study of chemistry and physiology.

During the dark ages, iron shoes for horses were more generally employed than they had been before; and when the barber began to combat the diseases of his fellow-creatures, it was natural enough for the blacksmith to proclaim war against those of the horse. But long after the revival of learning, and the example of other nations had compelled the barber and apothecary to abandon one part of his profession, and betake himself to studies more consonant with the duties of the other, the blacksmith remained immovable—

“ And pigs he rung, and bells he hung,
And horses shod and cured.”

He shunned improvement, and, to say the truth, many circumstances concurred to keep him out of its vortex. His profession, in a manner, excluded him from society in which he might have discovered the advancement of almost every art but his own; and his employers being for the most part as ignorant as himself, made no effort to reform him. Circumstances occurred, however, which prepared the way for a change. The immense losses sustained by the frequent appearance and appalling ravages of epizootic diseases, drew the attention of learned men upon those who had been the only medical attendants upon the lower animals. Many, no doubt, would be surprised to find such important matters entirely in the hands of blacksmiths, cowherds, and shepherds, who had not a single qualification to entitle them to any other name.

From the beginning to about the middle of the last century, almost every portion of Europe was, at one time or another, visited by pestilential diseases, which destroyed horses, cattle, and other animals by thousands. In some cases, breeds of cattle were nearly annihilated. In 1714, the counties of Essex, Surrey, and Middlesex alone, lost 5857 head of cattle in the short space of three months. Piedmont lost 70,000; Holland, 200,000; and it was calculated that Europe at this time lost in all

no fewer than 1,500,000 animals. In 1713, a fair which should have been held in Italy, was prohibited by law, to prevent the diffusion of a contagious distemper which prevailed in several places at that time. Certain drivers, however, unwilling to lose a market for their cattle, contrived to smuggle them into Rome, and sell them, though disadvantageously, in spite of the law. Immediately afterwards, an epizootic appeared, which spread with great rapidity over the whole Roman territory, destroying in its progress no less than 300,000 head of cattle. Governments, it may be supposed, were not inactive in their measures to repress or lighten these calamities. That of Britain adopted the precaution of ordering all infected cattle to be killed by strangulation and without effusion of blood; that their carcasses should be buried deep in the earth, with the hide entire; and that all fodder, litter, and every thing else which might communicate the contagion, should be buried along with them. Similar ordinances were promulgated by the government of France, and renewed for several years, strictly enjoining the destruction of the diseased animals, and that their carcasses should be buried, and their skins cut in pieces, in order to prevent any dealings for them. Indemnification was promised to those who thus lost their property, and a premium offered to whoever would substitute horses or mules for cattle in agricultural operations. In different places in France, guards were posted, to prevent any cattle from approaching them.*

Diseases, however, are not to be subdued by force; and although these legislative precautions were useful at the time, they did nothing to prevent or provide for the recurrence of the evil. It is true that a great many medical men paid considerable attention to, and published their observations on, several of the epizooties; but it at last became evident that he alone would be likely to be useful who understood the anatomy and physiology of the animals affected. There were no such persons to be found; and the readiest and, indeed, the only way of procuring and preserving them, was to establish institutions which would devote themselves solely to the cultivation of this hitherto neglected art. France led the way. In the year 1761, a veterinary school was founded at Lyons; and M. Bourgelat was appointed its professor. Four years afterwards, a similar institution was established at Alfort, near Paris. At a still later period, others were founded at Strasburgh, Montpellier, and Toulouse. Government presides over these, and, it is said, grants an annual stipend of 200,000 francs between those at Lyons, Alfort, and Toulouse. The example of France was quickly followed by other nations, and there are now one or more schools in almost every capital in Europe. Among many others that are in a flourishing condition, may be mentioned those at Copenhagen, Madrid, Vienna, Berlin, Dresden, Leipsic, Prague,

* Brewster's Ency. Article EPIZOOTY.

Munich, Fribourg, Marbourg, Mayence, Bamberg, Hanover, Turin, Naples, Parma, Padua, &c. Two years ago, there was a veterinary school established at Abou-Zabel, in Egypt, of which we have favourable accounts.

Fifty years back, there was no veterinary school in Britain. Now there are three: two in England, and one in Scotland. Some time ago there was a fourth in Dublin, but it has been given up.

The oldest and the best of those we have at present was established by the Odiham Agricultural Society, in conjunction with some eminent and influential men in London. In the year 1788, Charles Vial de St. Bel appeared in England, and published proposals for founding a school similar to those of France. He had been educated in that at Lyons, and had subsequently acted as junior assistant in that at Paris, which, it is said, he was obliged to abandon in consequence of some dispute with his seniors. His proposals met with little or no encouragement in this country, and he left it, disgusted no doubt with the Englishman's want of penetration. Two years afterwards, however, he returned, and again besought public attention to his former views. Still, though there must have been many capable of appreciating the importance of the subject, nothing effective was done; and M. St. Bel, after delaying several months, was on the point of relinquishing his design for ever, when he unexpectedly attracted the attention of Earl Grosvenor and Mr. Granville Penn. Both had inspected the continental veterinary colleges; both were men of discernment; and they saw at a glance the importance of establishing similar seminaries in this country. They therefore patronised St. Bel, and opened a communication with the Odiham Society, which had been contemplating the propriety of sending two young men to France to be educated there; but this design was relinquished upon becoming acquainted with St. Bel's. The members of the society, uniting their influence with that of several distinguished noblemen and gentlemen in London, succeeded in organising a committee for taking St. Bel's project into consideration. Several public meetings were held; subscriptions and donations were received from all quarters; a committee of directors were chosen; and the Duke of Northumberland, who had subscribed five hundred guineas to the funds, was elected president. Besides Earl Grosvenor and Mr. Penn, there were many others, among whom were John Hunter, Dr. Crawford, and Sir C. Banbury, who strenuously exerted themselves in behalf of the proposed institution; and many at a distance signified their approbation and intention of supporting it. It was ultimately resolved at a general meeting, that an infirmary and forge should be immediately erected on a piece of ground already selected at St. Pancras; that patients of all kinds should be admitted for treatment, upon certain conditions; that pupils should be received for instruction; and that M. St. Bel should occupy the professor's chair.

He was previously examined by a committee, over which John Hunter

and Mr. Cline presided. It is said he was a tolerable anatomist, but that his knowledge of the laws of life were purely French; and at that time the doctrines of the French physiologists were rather fanciful than solid. Unsatisfactory, however, as St. Bel's qualifications might be, he must be accepted, for there was no choice, and it was hoped that his industry and zeal would soon supply deficiencies. Delabere Blaine, well known as the author of "Veterinary Outlines" and "Canine Pathology," filled the office of assistant professor, but, as he says himself, "some impolitic attempts to convince the principal that many of his anatomical, but many more of his physiological ideas were incorrect, made him wisely conclude, that it would not be prudent to keep one about him who was able to detect his errors, and I, in consequence, received my *congé*."

Hardly, however, had St. Bel occupied his public situation a year, when he died. He died of a disease having some resemblance to that excited by the inoculation of glanderous matter. The infant institution was already involved in pecuniary difficulties; a successor to St. Bel could not be found, subscribers began to withdraw their names and support; creditors were clamorous; and ignorance and prejudice now thought themselves at liberty to decry the college as a bad and fruitless speculation. What with one thing and another, even its best friends began to be fearful that they had reckoned too much upon the discernment of those whose business and interest it was to maintain such an institution; and the appropriation of the buildings to some other purpose was in contemplation. Fortunately, there were some who saw that the time would come, when the college would be duly appreciated, and they manifested the utmost unwillingness to abandon it to oblivion upon so short a trial. They did all they could to prolong its existence, and to procure a teacher. Some of the pupils at St. Bel's death had been sufficiently far advanced to manage the Infirmary, of which they had charge for nearly a whole year, being the time the College remained without a professor. Mr. Moorcroft, then a respectable practitioner in London, and a graduate of one of the French schools, was applied to; but he demurred to accept of the professorship. Mr. Clark, of Edinburgh, who had distinguished himself by one or two veterinary publications, was next tried, but he also rejected the proffered honour. At length recourse was had to the medical profession, and here the difficulty was, not in procuring candidates, but in choosing one. Mr. Edward Coleman, at that time a very young man, had recently displayed considerable talent in a treatise on suspended respiration; and he had published some papers on the anatomy and diseases of the horse's eye, in which he exposed the ignorance and cruelty of the farriers in removing a useful appendage to this organ. Mr. Coleman was besides personally known to some of the directors, who were well able to estimate his talents. He was therefore appointed St. Bel's successor. Mr. Moorcroft was at first associated with him, but soon becoming weary, he abandoned the chair to the sole possession of his junior, Mr. Coleman.

In a short time the College regained the confidence of the public, and it has flourished ever since. It has now attained a degree of national eminence, which its beginning little promised. The accommodations for pupils and patients have been much extended, and the number of teachers has risen from one to four. Altogether, the Institution has done a great deal of good, not only to agriculturists and other proprietors of live stock, but indirectly to others connected with them. From the college have proceeded all our valued authors, and, with few exceptions, our best practitioners. Its pupils have succeeded, as far as could be expected in so short a time, in rooting out the farrier and the cow-leech with their abominably absurd and mischievous practices ; and they have inculcated a more rational and more humane system of managing animals in health. The sportsman's favourite is no longer doomed to endure the torturing, annoying, and dangerous, or deadly experiments of the blacksmith and the groom. No man of reflection will now resign his property to the uncontrolled management of a mere pretender.

Formerly, when there were no veterinary surgeons, the cavalry horses were placed under the treatment of the shoeing-smith, and the riding master. Their medical acquirements, as may be supposed, were any thing but useful. They could not be expected to relieve disease ; and to allow them to meddle with it, was only incurring the hazard of making bad worse. Something in the way of prevention might have been done by rational men ; but it appears that those whose business it was to superintend the general management of the horses, were as little qualified to prevent as to cure : and under the sway of ignorance and error, every species of absurdity had full scope. Glanders, farcy, grease, mange, blindness, and a host of other diseases, raged with unrestrained virulence ; no one knew either the cause or the cure.* As soon as the reputation of the veterinary college was fairly established, one of its pupils was appointed to each cavalry regiment, and ranked with commissioned officers. From that time to this, the beneficial influence of a total change in the government of the stables, has been every day more apparent.

The College is situated in the immediate neighbourhood of London. It is a plain unpretending erection of brick. It contains, if I recollect rightly, accommodation for between sixty and seventy horses. There is a forge, a covered ride, an operating theatre, an open paddock, and ten or twelve loose boxes. The dissecting room is spacious, and possessed of

* Whenever these diseases attack many animals, or appear frequently in a stud, there is gross negligence on the part of the owner, or shameful ignorance on that of the medical attendant. A gentleman told me that his father once lost 800 pounds, by glanders getting among his horses : and when his stables were, some years afterwards, examined, it was manifest that the primary cause of his loss had never been discovered, for it was even then in operation.

every thing that can make it convenient and comfortable. There is a very splendidly furnished museum, an excellent lecture room, and a neat laboratory.

There are two professors ; a principal, Mr. Coleman ; and an assistant, Mr. Sewell ; a demonstrator, Mr. Vines ; and a lecturer on Chemistry, Mr. Morton. Mr. Coleman lectures three times a-week. He is highly respected by his pupils as the founder of veterinary medicine, such as it is in Britain. He is the author of a work in two quarto volumes, on the horse's foot, and, as before observed, of one octavo on suspended respiration. Both are at present out of print. Mr. Sewell lectures twice a-week ; and Mr. Morton twice.

The students, besides, have the privilege of attending lectures in town, on surgery, medicine, anatomy, &c., free. At all proper hours they have access to the College Infirmary, and may therefore watch the progress of diseases with peculiar advantage. One or other of the professors reviews the whole of the patients every morning ; and the diligent enquirer has opportunities of enriching himself with such casual observations as the different cases elicit.

The patients are the property of subscribers :—“ Every subscriber of the sum of twenty guineas, is a member for life ; and every subscriber of two guineas annually, is a member of the society for one year, and entitled to all the benefits of the institution, while he continues such.”

“ A subscriber has the privilege of having his horses admitted into the infirmary, to be treated under all circumstances of disease, at the price of three shillings per night only, including keep, medicines, or operations of whatever nature that may be necessary : likewise, of bringing his horses to the College for the advice of the professor gratis, in cases where he may prefer the treatment of them at home.*

Subjects for dissection are easily procured from the knackers' yards or from Smithfield market. Asses are far more commonly used than horses, being more manageable, more easily obtained, and very little different in anatomical structure. Cattle, sheep, dogs, and other animals, are very rarely dissected. Even the teachers make no allusion to them—at least they made none all the time I was among them. This is a sad deficiency. The professors may, indeed, plead the absence of patients as an excuse for confining their lectures altogether to the horse, but there can be no excuse for avoiding the dissection of other animals ; for all are procurable when dead, if not when alive, and in disease. A knowledge of their structure would save the student from many a blunder, when he becomes a practitioner ; and it would enable him to profit by what he may see. The directors of the College will not do justice, till they enforce attention to this neglected portion of the students' education : and the

* Extract from “ Rules and Regulations of the Royal Veterinary College.”

pupils themselves will forget their own interest, if they do not voluntarily endeavour to supply the deficiency. They may procure subjects, and dissect them by the best authorities. In the English language, the best, and indeed the only work embracing the anatomy of cattle, is that written by Mr. Youatt, in the library of Useful Knowledge. In the French, the best is Girard's Veterinary Anatomy, which includes all domestic animals.

By a lately made regulation, the student must be twelve months at the College before he can obtain a diploma : he will not be examined sooner ; and unless he have previously been some time under an educated practitioner, not so soon. In this case he must be two years at the College before he will be allowed to come before those who are to judge of, and certify his qualifications. Formerly, when veterinary surgeons were few, and when there was much less to be taught, it was no uncommon thing for a young man to obtain a diploma after so little as three or four months attendance at the College. This, however, will no longer be permitted. Professor Coleman's course of lectures, occupies from nine to ten months of the year ; and of what value must he be as a teacher, if his pupils can very well dispense with a half or two-thirds of his instructions. Even the period of two years is far too short. To be what he ought to be, no man should enter the profession, till he has studied at least three years ; and though he were to make it four, there would still be little time for trifling. As it is, however, the student, after attending the stated period, is admitted to an examination. He is brought before a committee of medical men, among whom there are, or were lately, Sir A. Cooper, Sir C. Bell, Dr. R. Bright, Mr. Joseph H. Green, Dr. Cooke, Mr. B. C. Brodie, and Mr. Benjamin Travers. Mr. Coleman and Mr. Sewell are also present, but no other veterinary surgeon. The names of the medical men are known to all ; their pretensions to veterinary surgery command no respect, for they are presumptuous, and cannot be palliated, from whatever motive they are assumed. It is these medical men, however, who pass judgment upon the veterinary student's qualifications : if he answers their questions, he gets a diploma ; if not, he is referred to a longer course of study.*

The fees at the College amount altogether to about thirty guineas.

* In the very infancy of our science, medical men were undoubtedly the fittest persons to judge of the veterinary surgeon's qualifications, and Sir Astley Cooper and his colleagues had some right to assume the office of examinators. But, now that their places could be so much better filled by members of the veterinary profession, their retention of the office of veterinary examinators, to the total exclusion of others, is marked by extreme illiberality. It is disgraceful to them in particular, and certainly adds nothing to the respectability of the profession to which they belong. Let their biographers be silent on their conduct in this respect, lest in our disgust, we lose sight of that which deserves our approbation.

For entrance fee, there is twenty guineas ; Mr. Sewell's lectures, three guineas, or five ; Mr. Morton's, one ; the debating society, one ; and for the diploma, three more must be paid ; and that, before delivery, before the pupil is examined. No one, however, is bound, though he is expected, to pay more than the first and the last.

In point of time, the next school, is that at Edinburgh. Between eight and ten years ago, Mr. William Dick, a College graduate, who obtained his diploma in 1817, commenced a popular course of lectures in the Edinburgh Mechanics' Institution. For some years he met with little encouragement ; but he ultimately succeeded in attracting the attention and gaining the patronage of some influential members of the Highland Society. The importance of cultivating a subject so closely allied to the objects of this society, was quickly apparent, and soon afterwards Mr. Dick was appointed lecturer on veterinary surgery to the Highland Society ; and allowed a small yearly salary. I think it is not quite six years since any thing like a regular school was formed. Farriers, their sons and others, then began to come from distant quarters, to receive instruction ; and, that they might assume some consequence on their return, they obtained testimonials from Mr. Dick, and, if I am not mistaken, from some of his friends, medical men, and members of the Highland Society. Lately, there has been an annual examination of such pupils as were considered fit to practise. Several members of the Highland Society, a few of the Edinburgh physicians and surgeons, and, sometimes, an old pupil or two of Mr. Dick's, attend and assist upon these occasions ; and the candidate is rejected or accepted according to the manner in which he acquits himself before the examinators.

If Mr. Dick does not say that his lectures embrace the structure and medical management of all domestic animals, he allows others to say so for him. But, when it is considered that he lectures only three days a-week for five months at a time, and that Mr. Coleman, whose lectures are avowed to comprehend nothing but the horse, requires nine or ten months to complete his course, it will be concluded, and very justly, that when so many important subjects are discussed in so short a time, all must be imperfectly reviewed and hastily dismissed. And so in truth they are, and cannot be otherwise. It is impossible to run over the structure and diseases of the horse, cow, sheep, dog, poultry, pigs, &c., in the course of five months, at the rate of three hours a-week.

Not long ago, the pupils used to obtain an examination at the expiration of the first session ; but now they are very properly compelled to attend two. The pupils generally boast of attending two years ; but, with by far the greater number, this is not true. The most of them retreat to the place they came from, whenever the first session closes, and do not return till the beginning of the next : so that they are only ten months at school. The second session is, of course, very nearly the same as the

first ; but the student often learns from the former, what he could not comprehend at the latter.

Until last year, Mr. Dick had neither dissecting room nor infirmary. Above the forge, there was, indeed, what had once been an old hay-loft, but which in my time, had been economically converted into a dissecting-room, and a receptacle for lumber. Some alteration, however, has been made ; and I am told the place is now durable, which it certainly was not before. There is also a neat little infirmary now.

The fees at Mr. Dick's school are all comprised in ten guineas of entrance money, upon payment of which, the pupil has the privilege of attending the lectures as long as he pleases ; of witnessing Mr. Dick's practice, which is pretty extensive ; of attending the lectures of several eminent medical men in town ; and there is no additional expense incurred for the diploma.

The third school to which I have alluded, is Mr. Youatt's at London. He lectures at the London University, three, and sometimes five days a week. When five lectures are delivered, two of them are devoted to the medical and chemical properties of the drugs used in veterinary medicine. His course begins in October, and ends in July. It embraces the anatomy and diseases of all domestic animals. At the end of the course, the pupils are examined by a few medical and Veterinary friends of the teacher's ; and prizes are distributed to those who merit them. I do not know that Mr. Y. yet gives any testimonial certifying the bearer's competency to practise veterinary surgery. Indeed, his class is almost entirely composed of the college students ; and, consequently, his lectures are designed to furnish them rather with what they cannot get at the college, than with all they want. But his class is not large ; and for this reason :— Far too many of the young men attending the college, have no other object there but to obtain a diploma ; and, judging of others by themselves, they imagine that Mr. Coleman and the rest of the examinators may have some prejudice against them, and remember it when the day of examination comes, if it is known that the candidate attended any other school. It is needless to say, that this is altogether a libel upon Mr. Coleman. None but a narrow-minded fellow could conceive such a thing ; and no one who believes, would fear it, save those who know just enough of their own weakness to tremble at scrutiny. These, with the assistance of a grinder,* may learn enough by rote to cheat the examinators out of a diploma ; but they cheat themselves, too, as they very soon discover, after beginning business.

* A Grinder is one who hangs about the college and supports himself off the pupils, by pretending to teach them. He has mock examinations, in which the pupil, parrot-like, learns, without labour or thought, to give set answers to certain queries.

Mr. Youatt receives private pupils into his dwelling house, where they have opportunities of gaining an ample stock of valuable information. He has, attached to the house, a dissecting-room, and an infirmary for dogs; and, not far off, he has a forge for shoeing horses, and an infirmary for large animals; he has likewise an extensive practice: Mr. Youatt has the medical management of the animals in the Zoological Gardens; and among these his students have frequent opportunities of marking peculiar modifications of disease, the consequence of peculiarity of structure. Mr. Youatt is the author of a pamphlet on Madness in Dogs; the two volumes on the Horse and on Cattle in the Library of Useful Knowledge; and he is the principal Editor of the "Veterinarian," a monthly periodical.

Mr. Youatt's fee for admission to a single course of lectures, is five guineas; a perpetual ticket is procured for seven. His house pupils pay thirty guineas for three months; or for a longer period, fifty guineas for the first half year, and thirty guineas for each subsequent. These fees include every charge, board, lodging, &c., except washing.

On the comparative merits of the three schools, I have little to add to what has been already said. Each has defects, and advantages peculiar to itself; and the best way of correcting the one and profiting by the other, is to attend all three. The whole can afford more than any one of them. If the question were whether England or Scotland is the best place for studying veterinary surgery, the answer would undoubtedly be in favour of the former; for two schools could there be attended at the same time.

The College has been much abused by men who were but partially informed, and who, in the heat of their resentment against defects, forgot the merits of the place upon which they vented their wrath. The school at Edinburgh has been highly praised, and, though not so publicly, severely censured, by men who knew it only through the medium of newspaper paragraphs. And, as might be expected, both its faults and virtues have been misrepresented.

It is now nearly seven years since two monthly periodicals or veterinary journals simultaneously started into existence. The one was termed the "Farrier and Naturalist;" the other, the "Veterinarian." Both began their career by abusing the College most furiously. They said much that was quite true; and they exposed much that well deserved exposure; but, at the same time, they were unreasonable; and, it must be confessed somewhat malignant. They demanded cures where none could be effected; sometimes blamed those who were not at fault; and, forgetting how little power mere words have upon men in office, and how unwilling they are to be guided by those out of it, the reformers raved incessantly; and seemed to expect that abuses should be corrected the moment they were brought to light; and that innovation should have

taken place the instant it was suggested. “The Farrier and Naturalist” at length became exceedingly scurrillous, and died a natural death, aged three years. The “Veterinarian” still survives. It has been a radical from its birth, but it has maintained its hostility to the College with philosophic dignity, worthy of its avowed objects. It has now subsided into comparative quietness ; at least, we are not so frequently annoyed by articles which were wont to be poured out one after another, before any had time to operate. It has effected some reformation : it has, for one thing, compelled the student to prolong his residence at school ; its work, however, will be more apparent by and by. Advantage will probably be taken of quietness to effect changes which obstinacy resisted, more because it disliked dictation, than because it loved things as they were.

The reason that the College alone has been assailed by the journalists, is, not because there were no faults to be found elsewhere, but because it was the only institution of the kind they knew any thing about. The “Veterinarian,” in consequence, has been guilty—unwittingly, I am persuaded—of partiality ; it has represented the school north of the Tweed, as every thing that could be desired : but the truth is, there are few things better known on the north, than on the south side ; and the number of quacks which abound in Scotland, testify sufficiently that veterinary medicine is neither highly cultivated nor highly esteemed.

There is one advantage the College possesses, which I have omitted to mention : it is that of a debating society, into which new members are admitted by the votes of the majority. The student pays a guinea of entrance money ; and he is entitled to admission, and to take a part in the debates of the society. They meet once every week ; and each in his turn brings forward an essay for discussion. It is needless to dwell on the utility of such a proceeding. The society have a small library of select works, amounting to near three hundred volumes, which the members may consult at any time, or obtain possession of for a certain number of days.

It is not necessary to say much regarding the utility of these Veterinary schools. In a country like this, the welfare of the animals we call domestic, is inseparably connected with the prosperity of the nation, and their existence with that of the inhabitants. Our live stock contributes so much to the conveniences and happiness of human life, that without it, there would be no society. But a little reflection is requisite to show how much the civilization of man has depended upon the lower animals ; or, rather, it will appear that there would have been no civilization without them. Still less reflection points out the propriety of attending to their welfare. Indeed, every man already knows it is his interest ; but unfortunately, only a few understand how it is best promoted.

While it is universally admitted by every man in his senses, that no one can follow the profession of medicine without being educated for it,

many believe that no preparation is necessary for him who practises on the lower animals. Few, perhaps none, would expressly say so; but to know that such a belief prevails, and that very extensively, it is enough to look at those who are most frequently employed to treat the diseases of domestic animals. It certainly is not the veterinary surgeon, not the man who has prepared himself for his profession by a systematic education. It is often a conceited groom, an illiterate blacksmith, or an ignorant owner. Some appear to be perfectly aware that they do not give the patient every chance of recovering without entrusting him to an educated practitioner: they make it a rule to send for him when they discover that any thing is seriously wrong; that is to say, when the animal, between the doctor and the disease, has been brought to death's door, and is past all remedy. Others, still more ignorant, dabble away with drugs and operations themselves, and then call in the blacksmith to finish what they have begun—that is, in general, the animal's destruction. There are others who acknowledge that the blacksmith's assistance can be useful only in a very limited number of cases, but to avoid expense, or to please his ally the groom, they let him try what he can do before a professional man is called; and the mischief which the pretender may do in the meantime, is not considered. All this arises from ignorance, of what constitutes veterinary medicine, or of the danger of tampering with a living machine.

In an animated being, there is a great variety of processes going on, to which the ordinary observer is a perfect stranger: even their existence is unsuspected. The component particles of the body are continually changing; some are removed from one part to another, where they are more wanted; others are expelled as useless, and their place supplied by new materials; something is added here, something abstracted there; new atoms are made to supply the places of the old, the whole becomes deteriorated by use, and is purified. While life remains, it is employed without remission, not only in resisting and counteracting those agents which seek its destruction, but it is, at the same time, actively engaged in subduing and converting them into salutary means of preserving health, and prolonging existence. The processes by which these various objects are accomplished, are both numerous and complicated. They effect their purposes in silence. The being in whom they exist is unable to guide or control them by any effort of his will; and it is only by a multiplicity of observations on the dead and on the living, that he discovers such things are.

Health consists in the proper performance of these processes. When any of them are impeded, embarrassed, hurried, or interrupted, there is disease, or that is the immediate consequence. In a great many cases of disease, the vital energies of the constitution are summoned to restore health. A process is set up to remove or neutralize that which is pernicious,

or to repair injury, and often a cure is effected without external assistance. It is the business of the medical attendant to discover the nature of a disease—to remove the cause if it be still in operation—to assist or direct the curative process—to moderate undue ardour—to stimulate languor—to diffuse or concentrate the vital energy, according to the exigencies of the case and the condition of the patient. It often happens that disease attacks an animal in such a way, or at such a time that the surgeon has nothing to do but prevent injudicious interference, or to remove what is likely to aggravate the disease or interrupt the cure, which nature has begun, and which she gives evident signs of being able to complete. Often-times, however, certain circumstances make the very process which was intended to repair an injury, a destructive one, and then the surgeon must arrest it.

From all this it appears, that he who would manage the disorders of a living being must know something about its structure, the materials of which it is composed, their arrangement, their uses, and manner of operating. He must know the signs of sufficiency and those of distress—the agents that act upon living matter, their mode of acting, and their tendency, whether beneficial or prejudicial. Anatomy teaches us the structure of the body; mechanics, chemistry, and physiology, its functions; pathology its diseases; and *materia medica* the power of the remedies we employ in treating disease. These are merely different branches of one science—medicine. They are all as necessary to the veterinary as to the medical practitioner, and some of them more so.

I do not mean to say that every man entitled to the name of Veterinarian, by possessing a diploma, is master of all these; it is not requisite that he should. Of mechanics and chemistry, it is enough if he be acquainted with their general principles. Chemistry, though more insisted on in the schools now than formerly, is still too apt to be disregarded, because its connection with our science is not comprehended at a glance. But, though its importance is not very obvious, little can be known without its assistance; unless we understand the laws of dead matter, those of life must always remain unexplained. It is true, there are a few in the profession who know nothing about it,—but the teacher is not therefore to be blamed. Instead of receiving a thinking being for his pupil, he is often charged with one whose mind is as blank as a dog's; and what can he do? He cannot become schoolmaster, and spend his time in teaching the elementary branches of education. A foolish parent sends an overgrown booby from the back of the anvil to the college, and expects he will return an accomplished veterinarian. He may, indeed, have written his copy and read his Bible, but if he has done no more, you may be perfectly sure that he never thinks any more necessary. Such is the confidence of pure ignorance. It never occurs to so thick a head, that it is about to study a science which cannot be comprehended without preparation. It

is no uncommon thing to see such pains-taking blockheads poring a whole day over what another, no further advanced, but better educated student, would fully comprehend in five minutes. Without being able to understand or explain a single sentence, they will commit page after page to memory ; more than this they cannot accomplish—and, faith, they cannot see what more is wanted. It is a waste of time to offer the abstract truths of science to such thorough-bred stupidity. It were no more hopeless task to teach a savage the sublime truths of astronomy, or a babe mathematics.

Professor Coleman has been censured for saying that the blacksmith and the horseman make better veterinarians than medical men. But I am persuaded he never said, or, at least, never meant to say, anything of the kind. No one knows better what the veterinary surgeon should be ; and if he has ever been heard to express himself so paradoxically, he could refer to nothing but the dexterity of one class and the awkwardness of another in controlling their patients. If he were asked whether the blacksmith or the medical man would be best fitted to practise veterinary surgery, he would undoubtedly answer, the former, if they were equally susceptible of instruction, but not otherwise. It is needless, therefore, to quote his authority in support of the fallacious opinion, that mental training is less necessary to the veterinary than to the medical practitioner. Nothing but ignorance or affectation can doubt it.

We are not in all cases to attribute the deficiency of a veterinary surgeon to the want of elementary education, nor yet to suppose all who have it the best qualified for their profession. There are some who begin their career rather late in life, when established habits of indolence have rendered the mind incapable of serious application. And, to acquire the mechanical tact so requisite in a profession like ours, much coarse drudgery must be encountered, from which delicacy and age recoil with aversion. It is a great mistake to suppose that an operation—on the foot, for example—may be performed as well by an assistant, under the guidance of the principal, as by the principal himself. As well may the sculptor direct the chisel in the hands of another.

Another cause of insufficiency in the veterinarian, is intemperance. It is a vice characteristic of all the members of the old school, and one which the employer rather encourages than condemns. It is high time it were completely abandoned ; and that it soon would be if the employer would only consider his own interest. Let him recollect that an intemperate man cannot judge or prescribe correctly ; that he who devotes his leisure hours to dissipation frequently includes those of business ; and he can neither advance his profession nor do justice to his patients. Some must be altogether forgotten, and others remembered in haste, and treated without consideration. Those who have to do only with dead matter may relinquish the use of their senses, and sink into worse than beastly stu-

pidity when, and as often as they think proper ; but those who are called to act upon that which a blunder may ruin for ever, are bound in duty to bring to the task the free and unembarrassed exercise of all their faculties ; and as they may be called without a moment's warning, so they should always be in readiness.

When the members of a profession are unequal in point of acquirements, one unpleasant circumstance frequently occurs—that is, diversity of opinion. Two are consulted upon the same case, and they differ very widely, either as to the nature of the disease or the mode of treatment. Nothing is more mortifying to a man who reflects upon the consequence. It proves that there is ignorance on the one side or the other, or on both ; the respectability of all is lessened in proportion as the competency of the profession is doubted ; and it is easier for the vulgar to say that all are wrong, than to judge which is right. Two men, equally ignorant, will, if consulted apart, be sure to differ ; and both will be wrong. But two possessed of the same information, or, at least, the same which that particular case requires, will coincide. There are those, bad men they are, who will dissent merely for the purpose of raising themselves into importance at the expense of another ; and when two are consulted, and either is supposed to possess this unworthy disposition, the best way is to give them both the very same history of the case, and get their opinions separately, and before the one knows that of the other.

Faulty as some practitioners are, from whatever cause, the worst, with few exceptions, may always be relied on, in preference to the quack. I have now a few words to say upon his qualifications.

Quacks, empirics, cow-leaches, farriers, &c. are merely varieties of the same species ; and their business, whether they infest the veterinary or the medical profession, is fraud. They flourish most eminently where there are most ignorant people to employ them. It is needless to allude very particularly to what may be called amateur pretenders—to those who give their advice and their services, and desire no reward save the approbation of their own conscience, or, what they like better, a seat at table, where there is a good dinner and a suitable exhilarant. Almost every village maintains its principal quack ; he is generally the blacksmith ; but his privileges are sometimes encroached on by some one who manages to insinuate that his skill is not inferior to that of the pretender-in-chief himself. The opposition man is frequently no less a personage than a weaver, a butcher, a shoemaker, or a laid-up groom,—sometimes no man at all, but a doited old egg-wife, or a witch by habit and repute. The sphere of these, however, is comparatively confined, and my business is with the regular quack. I wish to examine the grounds upon which he founds his pretensions to skill ; and I find he builds most upon *great practice* or *long experience*. He has been among horses from his infancy ; he has seen a great deal of disease ; he has bled, balled, blistered,

rowelled, fired, fomented, poulticed ; he has all his grandfather's *receipts*, and a good few of his own, which, of course, are most invaluable ; he has knocked down a horse with a single blow of his fist ; he has swilled a gallon of ale at a sitting. What more would any reasonable man desire ? These are the constituents of the beautiful structure he has reared—all by his own exertions, all out of his own head. He thanks God he has never theorised. As for those white-fingered gentry, the *vetinays*, they are mere theorists—impertinent theorists—they are all theory, no practice, no experience.

Theory is just an explanation of, or an attempt to explain, some circumstance which we know or think it important to understand. Practice gives us dexterity in doing a thing. Theory, or reasoning, teaches us when to perform an operation and when to let it alone. Does not the farrier theorize ? He certainly does ; we shall not be so unjust to him as he is himself. He sometimes, though, it must be confessed, not often, makes an attempt to explain what he sees or does. If your horse be too fat, he is full of humours, and he must have three doses of physic. Three is the proper number, and he must neither have more nor less. The first is to stir up the humours, the second to set them afloat, and the third to carry them all off. This is an example of the quack's mode of theorizing. Proof is out of the question, and to demand evidence in support of his conceits is to insult him. He opposes every thing by dogmatical assertion. Attempt to explain any thing to him, and you are an incorrigible theorist.

To hear the pretender boast of his experience and practice, and his aversion to theory, one would imagine that veterinary medicine was merely a piece of handicraft, only to be acquired after a great many fruitless efforts, and that theory was something which rendered perfection impossible. We have but few very difficult operations to undertake ; none but what a skilful anatomist may perform as well, and very nearly as quickly, and easily at the first, as at the fiftieth attempt. But the main thing is, not so much to do, as to know what should, and what should not be done. Any man may bleed a horse, but only a few know when and why he should, or should not be bled.

The great experience upon which the empiric lays so much stress, may all be reduced into very little compass. It is a plausible excuse for high pretensions only to those who have never analyzed it. The word itself is merely another name for knowledge, and though it is generally applied to that which is gained by actual observation, yet when the result is accurately communicated, the difference is of no great consequence. The knowledge of the educated and the uneducated man varies widely, both in the mode in which it is acquired and in its extent. The latter begins his career destitute of all information, and with no assistance save what he thinks himself surc of in the possession of some

barbarous recipes, and traditional rules, handed from age to age. He goes on trying one thing after another, and at length, after sacrificing a multitude of victims, he discovers that one thing kills, another cures, and another does neither. He does not get even this little knowledge till he has done immense damage. For, such is his profound ignorance and utter want of penetration, he does not perceive his error till the consequences have been repeatedly exposed to his view: nothing but the death of his patient, times out of number, will convince him that his treatment is bad. The employer, of course, must pay for all this—must not only lose his property, but pay the man for destroying it. This is the source of the farrier's great experience, which, great as it is, he would find some difficulty in filling a sheet of paper by recording.

The educated practitioner must pay for his experience or knowledge out of his own pocket. In the course of his studies he learns, or ought to learn, both the principles and the practice of his profession, which, if they did no more, would at least prevent him from committing any very grievous blunder. But, besides, he imbibes the experience, not of one man only, but of multitudes of those who have begun their career under the most auspicious circumstances—have spent their lives in ardent and well-directed efforts to improve their profession—and who have ultimately bequeathed the result of their observations to posterity. And when the student has appropriated to himself all that is valuable, he may consider himself fortunate if, at the close of his career, he can reflect that he has added much to the common stock.

Veterinary, like human medicine, has reached its present state by the combined exertions of the talented and the laborious of many ages; and it is truly surprising to witness the importance unthinking people attach to the experience of one who is ignorant alike of the past and of the present. The farrier's experience is the general answer to all remonstrance. It is not considered how confined is his sphere of action—how incapable he is of observing with precision—how incompatible his habits, manners, and education are with the practice of a profession requiring much reflection, caution, industry, and strict sobriety. The quack is not seen in his true character. Few, indeed none but professional men, can behold him undisguised; they alone can estimate his abilities; and they only have frequent opportunities of seeing them put to the test. His proceedings are regulated by rules the most absurd, or by none at all. He combats disease as if it were a thing to be drowned by his draughts or knocked down by his balls.* He never sees a case in which he does not think it absolutely necessary to give or to do something. He has no conception of nature effecting a cure without his assistance; or if he does admit or believe that it is possible, he will nevertheless confidently affirm

* The name given to pills.

that his vaunted compounds are in no danger of interrupting a curative, or aggravating a destructive process. Yet it is true that his weapons are in general so ill chosen, and so indiscriminately employed, that instead of assisting or encouraging Nature's attempts to repair injuries, they often frustrate her altogether, or give her efforts such a direction, that what before might be trifling and curable if left alone, often becomes mortal. It was a favourite saying of a worthy physician, that in all cases there were three things to be considered—the patient, the disease, and the doctor ; and, continued he, when any two of these pull well together, they generally beat the third. Now, whoever entrusts a sick animal to ignorance, should consider that he is, in all probability, pitting the disease and the doctor against the patient, and that nothing but great constitutional strength will enable him to survive the combat. It frequently does so, though he is sometimes so completely shattered, that he had better died. Altogether the quack doctor, whether he practise on man, or on the lower animals, is one among the lowest and the vilest of human beings. He is detestable and dangerous in proportion as he knows his ignorance, and has art to hide it. His life is one continuous course of fraud ; for he is as destitute of honour or honesty as of professional abilities. He deludes his employers into a belief, that he can serve them ; and maintains his pretensions by incessant boast. At one time he affects to despise science, to ridicule books and collegians ; and he trusts all to his own unequalled sagacity : his knowledge is the pure offspring of instinct. At another time he is loud in praise of his scientific acquirements ; and he confounds his auditor with a volley of unintelligible babble. He peeps into a learned work, which he cannot understand, but from which he commits to memory a few technical terms and phrases : with these he astonishes both the illiterate and the learned ; the former by his display of science, the latter by his incoherence and pronunciation. If fortunate enough, by means of big words and mystery, to extort deference or flattery from the lowly, he straightway assumes consequential airs of superiority, and struts about in pompous emptiness. If his infallibility be doubted, he blusters, talks big, and threatens for the future to refuse aid, which he intimates cannot be dispensed with.

Those who tolerate the quack, do not know him. Those who know, but think him too low for exposure, are little aware of his influence ; or they think too much of themselves, and too little of others. They surely cannot have beheld with indifference, multitudes of sensitive beings, silently, yet mournfully writhing under his cold blooded ferocity, and ultimately sacrificed to his ignorance. They have not seen the poor man and his family deprived of their little all, of their only means of subsistence, while, from the defective state of our laws, the shameless ruffian escapes with impunity.